

**Santa Rosa Island Oral History Project  
Santa Rosa Island Chapter  
1993**

**Interview with Al Vail  
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at the office of Vail & Vickers  
123 West Padre Street**

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***Transcribed by Carolyn Petry***

CP: Let's start with 1962, with the death of your Uncle Ed, and you took over as ranch manager.

AV: Right.

CP: Can you tell me what your duties were?

AV: Well, the duties expanded, because I had the responsibility then of not only of working on the island, but I had the responsibility of the whole operation, which included many things, but the most important one was the buying and selling of the cattle. So that was the biggest change in my duties, in that I had the responsibility then. I had the responsibility for the whole operation, but my Uncle used to take care of all the buying - primarily most of the buying and selling and that came under my responsibility then.

CP: Okay. Had your uncle been training you?

AV: Quite a bit. Yeah. Sure.

CP: So when you took over, and you started buying cattle, did you have to be off the island more, I assume, to do that?

AV: Well I spent more time after, after he passed away I spent more time on the mainland of course.

CP: How do you buy cattle? I mean, how do you do that?

AV: Well we used to go in the country and do a lot of buying and travel around to various places, Arizona, New Mexico, and today it's been more -- the telephone is used much more, and we have more commissioned people buying for us, people that we know. So, we don't travel in the country as much, near as much as we used to.

CP: Did you used to actually go look at them?

AV: Oh yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And, of course, there were a lot of different places that we bought the cattle from every year, so we knew the cattle -- it was a matter of establishing a price and making a deal.

CP: Did you like that part of it?

AV: Oh yeah. Very interesting. Meet a lot 'o different people. Get a little boring after you did so much of it or more...important .... receiving the cattle. We used to go out and contract 'em and later on go back and have to receive 'em.

CP: How is that different?

AV: Well you ... everything is already established. I mean... in terms of contracting the price, it's already established when you contract 'em, and it's just a matter of being there to receive 'em on the date that you establish, and paying for it. Receiving - you cut any undesirable cattle out and write a check for 'em.

CP: Oh, so you could look at them at the last minute and say...

AV: Well, all contracts have a clause in there that you can cut the undesirables and unmerchantables (?) out, so when you go to receive the cattle you cut out, if they haven't

worked 'em properly or if there's some in there that doesn't belong, you can cut 'em out before you ship 'em.

CP: And how were you shipping in those years? Was it the same?

AV: I don't understand your question.

CP: Were you shipping on the .... when did the Vaquero II get built?

AV: She was commissioned in '58.

CP: Okay. So she was built. Were you using her pretty much consistently '62 - '87?

AV: Yeah. We used her totally. We didn't use anything else after she was commissioned. That was the only boat we used.

CP: And have you always gone in and out of the same port?

AV: No. We originally, years ago, went out of Wilmington.

CP: Oh, I mean since '62 - since the Vaquero II.

AV: Oh yeah. Everything's been Port Hueneme. I was goin' back real far, but since we built the Vaquero II all our shipping's been in and out of - we might of years ago hauled a couple of, hauled a piece of a load to Santa Barbara. I can't remember now. I gotta think. But you might say just about everything - say everything's been out of Port Hueneme since we built the Vaquero II. I was thinkin' back to the late 40s when we hauled some cattle on a schooner, and hauled 'em up to Santa Barbara. But everything's been out of Hueneme.

CP: I should ask you about that <ed. note: the schooner> another time. In those days, well it's not even that long ago, '62 - 87, what's an average amount of cattle you'd have on the island in those years?

AV: Well of course the average amount -- we build up our numbers in the spring and then when we ship 'em our numbers are way down, so we kinds average around 6000 - 6500 in the spring at the peak and take it down to around 3000 in the fall.

CP: Sounds like a lot of animals.

AV: Or in the, I say fall -- in the spring is when we get the last of our cattle, say they'll be off early in July and so we're down to say, roughly 3000 head then.

CP: And that works out well 'cause there's not as much feed, I suppose, in the summers. You planned it that way...

AV: Well, now, you got it - you got the picture. See, now, there's not as much feed but, say, if we cut the herd in half - we actually are cuttin' it by about 75% 'cause we've taken all the big cattle out and then we just have the smaller cattle.

CP: You take the big eaters.

AV: Exactly. Exactly.

CP: Yeah. The island's really well suited to that type of operation, isn't it?

AV: Exactly.

CP: And it's always been that type of operation hasn't it?

AV: Yeah. Oh we have had some mother cows there a time or two, but we go back and the cows don't do very good in a real dry year, so we do much better as a stocker operation.

CP: How many cowboys have you kept over there?

AV: We keep it to, usually around a half a dozen.

CP: And is that enough?

AV: Yeah. We put an extra man or two on in the spring, but usually about 6 boys, 5, 6 boys - steadies.

CP: Okay. I'm interested ... when you just started being the manager, what was it like to be a boss?

AV: Well, I'd been around being a boss, I'd been around Ed for so long I don't think there was much of a transition there, to tell you the truth.

CP: Yeah. You felt ready.

AV: Yeah. Right.

CP: Did you - and do you - get along with the cowboys pretty well?

AV: Oh yeah. I get along with 'em.

CP: How do you think they feel about you?

AV: Well I don't think I'd win any popularity contests from 'em, but I think they respect me, and that's all I'm shootin' for.

CP: And what do you do, do you think, that makes them respect you?

AV: Oh I don't know how to answer that question, really. But, I mean, I try to be fair with 'em and I don't favor anybody over anybody else and try and be fair with 'em.

CP: That's a good answer. I think that's a wonderful thing to have in a boss.

AV: You know, the boss guy, the final decision of the thing's always - he has to make 'em and sometimes they're not all the most popular decisions, but as I say, I try to -- I'm not trying to run for any popularity contest, but I'm trying to be fair with everybody. And I think I am.

CP: What do you look for when you hire a cowboy?

AV: Somebody's who's willing to work. 'Cause if they don't know much about it and we hire all sorts, but if they don't know much about it, if they want to, if they're young and they want to learn something we - and they're willing to work, that's all we really need. Sometimes that's a hard quality to find these days, too.

CP: Yeah, and I don't know how you look for that in an interview. How do you do that?

AV: I don't know. You kinda have a feel for it, but most of the people we get, most of these cowpunchers are friends of the boys that are workin' on the island.

CP: A lot of word of mouth.

AV: Yeah. Right.

CP: Has it always been that way?

AV: Pretty much so. We've tried hiring 'em out of employment agencies and what not, and it doesn't work.

CP: Well we've talked about that it takes a rather unique individual to be able to live out there.

AV: Yeah.

CP: Yeah. Okay - what are some things that you've had to do as a boss that have been not so fun for you. What don't you enjoy about it?

AV: Well if, once in a while if I've hired somebody and it doesn't work out, I don't enjoy firing 'em, if they have to be let go. That very definitely I don't enjoy. And, I don't know, aside from that, any real hard things involved.

CP: Do you feel you're pretty well suited to the job of Ranch Manager?

AV: Well I hope so. I was kinda - I was trained for it and it's all I've done all my life, so if I'm not suited for it there's been a - things have been awfully fouled up. No, I'm suited for it.

CP: I think you are too.

AV: In other words, I have confidence in myself.

CP: And have you always had that? I guess this goes back to my first question.

AV: I don't know whether I can answer that. I think I've always had quite a bit of confidence, yeah. Yeah, I've gotta say, I think I have.

CP: Now this is a hard question, because I know there's no such thing as an average year, but how much time, per year, since you've been ranch manager....

AV: Don't ask me that. I don't know - how much time I spend over there?

CP: Yeah. It really changes?

AV: Well I spend a lot, always have spent a lot of time in the spring, when we're gathering cattle, and then it varies.

CP: Well let's try this: what are some of the years that have been tough, since '62? Have you had any tough years?

AV: Well our toughest years have been the last few years in this miserable drought. Yeah.

Real tough years. We had one year we didn't put any young cattle on the island at all, and another year we put a few, but not too many, but our toughest years have been the drought years. That's an easy question to answer.

CP: And the good years? The easy years?

AV: A year like this, when there's a lot of grass, more grass than cattle. And a pretty good market to go with it. This is a real good year, really.

CP: What makes a good market? What does that mean?

AV: Cattle market, the prices of the cattle.

CP: How do they price cattle - per pound I suppose?

AV: Yeah, right.

CP: Now do you sell your cattle for beef? Is that right?

AV: No, we sell 'em as feeder cattle. Sometimes we finish 'em and sell 'em for beef but we haven't for a number of years. The last four or five years we shipped these cattle all to town as feeder cattle and we sell 'em F. O. B. Port Hueneme.

CP: F.O.B. F.O.B.? What's that mean?

AV: Well, on delivery. On arrival.

CP: Oh, oh, oh... it's a delivery term.

AV: Yeah.

CP: This is all new to me.

AV: We weight 'em up on the island and sell 'em island weights, delivered to Port Hueneme.

CP: Okay. So when you say feeder ... they're fed for a few more years?

AV: Then they'll -- not for a few more years -- they'll feed 'em for another... these big heavy steers I guess they'll average about ninety days, sixty to ninety days they'll feed 'em.

CP: Just to really fatten 'em up?

AV: Yeah.

CP: I'm beginning to understand, finally.

AV: But most of these cattle, the last few years, have gone out of state to be fed.

CP: Why?

AV: Well, there's not ... things change, and there's not near as many feed yards in California, particularly Southern California, and the number of packing plants is way down. All the action is in the mid-west, or Utah, or Idaho.

CP: Well they got room.

AV: Colorado. Well, call it mid-west. Out of state, anyway.

(Counter reads 152/3)

CP: Okay. Now, since '62; let's say between '62 and '87, have you gone out there much with your family?

AV: Well, some.

CP: Is there a trend? I mean, do you usually go out in the summer?

AV: Oh, I don't think there's much of a trend. Kay hasn't gone out in a long time, but I take the girls out off and on.

CP: What about when the girls were young?

AV: Well, I took 'em out quite a bit when they were young. Now, it's a little harder, with workin' and what not.

CP: I know.

AV: You know how those things go.

CP: So if you were out there - just you - for a spell of time during these years, what do you do for your leisure time, your evenings in particular?

AV: Well there's not a lot to do over there in the evenings.

CP: Well, since '62 we've gotten TV, so do you have tv out there now?

AV: I watch just the news. I don't watch too much tv. Reading's the most thing. (?)

CP: You're a big reader?

AV: Quite a bit.

CP: Me too. Good stuff to do on an island.

AV: Yeah. Well, it's a good place to catch up on your reading.

CP: What about the cowboys? What have they done, since '62, in their leisure time? Has that changed at all?

AV: Well television is the big thing that's changed, more than anything else, for recreation.

CP: And do the cowboys watch a bit of it?

AV: Yeah, they watch quite a bit of it.

CP: Well, it's a good thing to do, I guess, when you're really tired. It doesn't take much brain power.

AV: Either that or go to sleep, when you're really tired.

CP: Yeah. One of the two. What about when you're off the island, since '62. I know you buy



cattle, but what do you do here, in the office?

AV: Well, general office work here. What's goin' on. Paperwork and so forth and so on.

CP: What kind of paperwork?

AV: *(Holds up bunch of paper)* No, but you know, right now I got a boat down in drydock and I been discussing building some corrals in Hueneme. I was both places today. It seems like there's always somethin' to do.

CP: Seems like it, judging from the phone anyway. Every time I come here, it's ringing.

AV: That's hard - to go back and look at things, but it seems to keep pretty busy.

CP: Since 1962, where has the office been, the Vail & Vickers office?

AV: Right here.

CP: When did it come here?

AV: Oh let's see. 1962. No. Vail & Vickers moved here in about '64 or '65. Russ could give you the exact date. I can't right now, but about '64 or '65.

CP: After the Pauba sale?

AV: After we liquidated the Pauba Ranch - or we liquidated Vail Company, then we moved the office here, 'cause the office was in Los Angeles, and we had the island up here and the ranch down south, and that was kind of a central place for the office. There was no reason to have it after we liquidated the Vail Company, so I moved it up here.

CP: Okay. Thanks. Now I want to move on and talk about your relationships with inhabitants of the other islands, particularly the northern channel ones. I'm interested in knowing which inhabitants you've known over the years.

AV: Well, starting at ... let's go with San Miguel. I knew ol' Herbie Lester and his wife, and of course, Bobbie Brooks who ran the operation, but he didn't live on the island, but he had it under lease from the government.

CP: Tell me how you came to know him, and what sorts of experiences you had with him.

AV: Well, we used to supply transportation for him - Vail & Vickers used to supply transportation to San Miguel and haul his sheep and so forth and so on, and just being around 'em, we got to know him.

CP: And what sort of a character was he?

AV: Crazy. He was crazy.

CP: Literally? Did you know that then?

AV: Well he was always pretty, you might say a little unstable, but yeah, he was crazy. You know, he ended up shooting himself.

CP: Oh. I do remember that. So can you tell me what it was like to be on a boat with him?



AV: I was never, I never did - spend much time around him, but I knew him.

CP: He had a reputation, even in those days?

AV: Yeah. But of course, he didn't spend much time on a boat. He was on the ranch, or on San Miguel. He was there, you know, when they were hauling sheep or what not, but he didn't ride the boat. Russ would remember him more than I would, but I can remember him very well.

CP: Think livin' on the island made him nuts?

AV: No. He was - I don't think so. He was a great friend of Bobby Brooks, who had the island under lease, and he was what was called in those days *shell shocked* in World War I, and I guess you call it *battle fatigue* or something, but he really couldn't cope with society. Let's put it that way, so that was kind of a good spot for him. And his wife was a well educated lady. She was a school teacher something back on the east coast I guess. Anyway they raised two girls out there.

CP: You never got together socially with them?

AV: No.

CP: Okay. What about Bobby Brooks. Did you know him?

AV: Oh yeah. Very well. Well, I mentioned him - I already mentioned him.

CP: Well, you mentioned him, but I'm wondering what kind of person he was.

AV: Great man. Yeah, he was.

CP: What made him great.

AV: Well, he was just a great man, is all. A fine man.

CP: How did you know him?

AV: Well, I knew him through my father, originally, and then I used to see him in town, or I'd see him goin' back and forth to the island occasionally. I know one time he got blown in to Santa Rosa Island when we had a southeaster. He was there for three or four days with nothing to do, so we sat around and shot the breeze. He was really a great guy. You know his family's - one of the gals, one of his daughters lives there in the old family house there in Carpinteria.

CP: Is that Meredith? Meredith Brooks? She's a painter?

AV: Yeah, but I think her name is Ky. Well, maybe ...

CP: They call her Ky. Nita knows her.

AV: I guess her name is Meredith. I don't know. I know 'em, I know the girls by their nicknames.

CP: Yeah. They call her Ky. She's on the Advisory Council now, to the Chapter.

AV: To...?

CP: To our group.

AV: Yeah. Okay. She's a good head. I think she's the youngest one.

CP: Did you know her when she was growing up?

AV: I knew all the gals, just kind of knew 'em. They were all younger than I. You don't get much older than me, now. But, no, I remember them all, very well.

CP: Did you get together with the Brooks ever, socially?

AV: When my family was alive, they used to go visit one another. I remember that very well, but that's a long time ago. Later on we never got together socially, but we'd see one another every so often.

CP: When your parents were alive and they visited, did they visit on the islands or the mainland?

AV: No, on the mainland.

CP: Okay. I see. What about Santa Cruz Island. Who did you know on Santa Cruz Island?

AV: Of course I remember, oh, I call him Old Man Stanton - that's Carey's father. I remember him, and Carey of course. And Carey's brother I knew, but not well. He was the one that was killed in the war. And of course the Stantons go back quite a ways, because our parents - our grandparents were friends.

CP: Oh really? Where?

AV: In Los Angeles.

CP: Did they live in the same town?

AV: In Los Angeles. (Pause) That wasn't a very big town.

CP: Right. You're right.

AV: I can see we're reaching back quite a ways.

CP: Yeah. Nowadays it's a million cities.

AV: Yeah. You're reaching back into the early nineteen hundreds.

CP: My grandmother lived there. It was small.

AV: There weren't too many people, and people kinda got to know one another, you know, the leading families. So anyway, I didn't know that of course, but I've been told that the grandparents were friends, and of course my dad and Ed Stanton, Sr., and Uncle Ed were big friends. And then, as I say, I knew their oldest boy who was killed, but not too well. I knew Carey ever since they bought the island is the first time I remember him, and they bought the island in the 30s, so ever since we were 10 or 12 year old kids.

CP: Wow. Did you talk about what it was like to be island families?

AV: I don't think so. I don't know the question, don't really understand the question.

CP: Well, I think it's fascinating that the islands are so close together, and there were these folks that owned them, and it seems like you knew each other... and I'm just wondering if you talked about.... there aren't many people who own islands - that's what I guess I'm getting at.

AV: Yeah. I don't know. I imagine more of that conversation was going on with the older generation than with our generation.

CP: Yeah. That's probably true. Did you socialize much with Carey on Santa Cruz, or he on Santa Rosa?

AV: Not a great deal, but we knew one another. No, I can't say there was a lot of socializing going on, but we'd see one another. In fact, I used to buy his calves all the time, go over there and spend the night at his house. I'd do that a couple of times a year.

CP: So you did some business together?

AV: Oh yeah. I did quite a bit of business with Carey.

CP: Just buying cattle, or other types of business?

AV: Used to buy his calf crop, and then I used to ship some of his cattle - when they lost the schooner - then we used the Vaquero II and hauled his cattle to town, and so, what cattle he'd ship to town, we'd ship to town, and some of his calves that I'd buy, we'd ship to the island. In fact, I hauled all of his cattle, is what it amounted to. They lost the schooner in, I can't think of when, but it was in the, way back in the ... we'd just built the Vaquero II, oh around 19... about 1960 I guess, they lost the schooner. Marla could tell you that.

CP: Oh yeah. Off the tip of her tongue.

AV: But anyway, after the schooner went down we hauled all the cattle for him.

CP: For how long?

AV: Until they went out of business. In fact, we hauled the ... after Carey passed away then you know the Nature Conservancy got a hold of the island, and they were ... when they decided to go out of the cattle business then we hauled all the Nature Conservancy off the island, off of Santa Cruz, with the Vaquero II.

CP: I see. I heard a story, part of a story, something about a cook and a gun on Santa Rosa and you guys going over to help. Do you know what I'm talking about?

AV: On Santa Cruz.

CP: I'm sorry. Santa Cruz. What was that story?

AV: Oh they had a wild man runnin' around, that was shooting at the house and doing a lot of things and so ... E. K. can tell you the story better than I can. We went over there to see what was goin' on and to have a big manhunt and we took a dog over, 'cause they had a fine dog and they didn't want to put him in the helicopter, hurt his ears maybe, so we took him over on the Vaquero II and to make a long story short we never got the dog out of the cage 'cause E. K. Smith and Harry Looney figured out that this cook was the guy that was doin' all the shooting at the ranch house, and doin' all these screwy things, and so they kinda solved that, and so

for your own information, it turned out after they had it all solved, then we turned around and got into his liquor and his food and had a pretty good party and went on back to town, with no captive man and the dog never worked. But, the guy kept them awake for several days and they were pretty concerned about it.

CP: Well, you had a good adventure.

AV: Yeah. It was pretty good. But I was ... EK asked me if I'd take the dog over for 'em on the boat, 'cause they were concerned about maybe the helicopter upsetting his ears, and I said sure I'd love to, but I'd never been on a manhunt and I thought that'd be a helluva lot of fun, but we never got the dog outta the cage.

CP: Whose dog was it?

AV: It was some tracking dog that belonged to somebody in the Sherri's Department.

CP: So it came from Santa Barbara.

AV: Yeah, right. We went out of Santa Barbara.

CP: Great. Great.

AV: Yeah, but EK can give you the particulars on that a little better.

CP: Yeah, I'm gonna get EK. Who was on that boat though? Was that you and Russ and EK?

AV: Russ didn't make the trip. EK and Harry Looney of the Sherri's Department and myself were the three main people I can remember, and I think there's one or two other sheriffs. That's when ol' Henry Duffield was alive of course, and Carey, and Carey didn't want to believe that the cook was doing that, and I remember Harry Looney saying well you can believe whatever you want to, he said, but if you get rid of the cook you'll get rid of your problems, and so that was exactly the way it worked out.

*(Tape reads 374)*

CP: Did you ... was there anybody else who lived on Santa Cruz, who we haven't mentioned, that you knew?

AV: Well of course, the Stanton... the Gherinis.

CP: Oh, right. Who, of them?

AV: Well, I was a good friend of Pier's. In fact, I was a pall bearer at his funeral, and he was a fine man, Pier was. He's got three boys that I know, good guys as far as I know 'em. John stayed in the law business. I know him better than any of the rest of 'em. In fact, he does some of my law work for me. And then the last of the ... there's two sisters and I've met one - very nice lady and Francis Gherini, but I've just met them. I'm not close to 'em. I feel that I've been real good friends with Pier and John. And here's a picture of both of them.

CP: That's the best picture.

AV: This is social life on Santa Rosa. That's John Gherini, that's his dad, there you got Carey Stanton.

CP: And look at you and Russ. Bookends.

AV: Yeah.

CP: What was the occasion here?

AV: Just a get together of the island owners. I don't think ... that was the main reason for the thing. I don't have a date on it, of course.

CP: Was it after the Park Service, or before? That would date it.

AV: Now that's a good question. I'm pretty sure it was after the Park Service. Yeah, it was after the Park Service.

CP: How did you come to know the Gherini's?

AV: Evolution. I guess you can't be island owners and not somehow get to know one another, but...(phone rings - end of side one)

CP: We were talking about how you got to know the Gherini's, and you'd just said, well, let's see...if you own an island sooner or later you just get to know one another.

AV: Yeah, and, in fact, we hauled sheep for the Gherini's, when they had sheep over there too. They had - oh what'd they call it, it was the Hodge, and they sunk it out here, and after that we hauled their sheep for 'em.

CP: Is that how you met the Gherini's?

AV: No, I think I knew 'em before, but that's where I got better acquainted with 'em.

CP: How, before, might you have known them?

AV: Well, I knew Pier before, but not too well. But I got much... So, it wasn't the first time I met 'em, but I got better acquainted with 'em after we started haulin' sheep for 'em, of course.

CP: Well, yeah, I should think so.

AV: Obviously. I just started doin' business with 'em.

CP: Yeah. Okay. Well, we'll end for the day.

*(Pause. Tape reads 013. Tape resumes as Al Vail and Carolyn Petry have commenced more casual conversation)*

AV: ...or old man Stanton was kinda the number one man over there until Carey Stanton - he was on the east coast as a doctor, you know.

CP: Carey was. And so who was this guy:?

AV: Sonny Boynton. And he was kinda the foreman over there until Carey decided to go to the island, and then he left.

CP: And how'd you know him - how'd you get to know him?

AV: Let's see. How'd I get to know him ... oh I'm trying to think when I first met him. I have



to go back a long time ago, but I think it was when we dumped, we lost a load of cattle, we lost a barge - we put some cattle on the - the towboat ran into Santa Cruz Island, and the barge hit the island, so we unloaded the cattle on the island, and so then they tried to take the barge down to, a steel barge, tried to take the barge down to Pedro to repair it, but she sunk on 'em on the way down, so we got a bunch o' cattle on the west end of Santa Cruz, and so we got the - I put a couple 'a boys over there - or Ed did, he was alive then, took a couple, left a couple a' cowpunchers over there, to kinda keep an eye on the cattle and get 'em located, and then we drove 'em across to Prisoner's Harbor and hauled 'em in on the schooner, and I think that was where I first met Sonny, and that's a long time ago, 'cause he was operating the boat at that time.

CP: Well, see, you know more people that I know you know.

AV: Yeah, I just ... I knew ol' - of course one of the characters of Santa Cruz Island was old Pete Olivera, you'd heard 'em speak of him, haven't you?

CP: No.

AV: Marla would. He was an old dago that was kind of a character there, good cat skinner and what not, and he's well entrenched in the Santa Cruz Island history. I didn't know him that well. Sonny was a real good friend. In fact, I saw Sonny just the other day.

CP: Oh, he's still here.

AV: Oh yeah. He's, he lives out in the boondocks someplace. I don't see him as much as I used to, but I just crossed his path the other day, and we allowed as how (?) we'd get together for lunch. We were pretty close there for a while. But I think of him, and old Henry Duffield, aside from just Stanton. You know, those things kinda come back when you start thinking.

CP: I know. That's why I try to get you this stuff in advance, so you can think about it. You're busy though, so that's hard to do.

AV: I'm not all that busy, but I couldn't find my thing.

CP: Well, I tell you what I'll do before next time, I'll make you a copy and drop it by.

AV: You left ... here, see what you think of this. I had to save this. Did you see this?

CP: Oh, that's the one - yes, yes. I have it in my files. I can't believe anybody would submit a report like this to their superior. It's just unbelievable to me.

AV: It's not very professional is it.

CP: It's terrible. Hey, I've got one more question before I leave.

AV: I can give you that. Do you want a copy? I'll give you a copy.

CP: Oh no. I've got a copy. Why do you call a cowpuncher a cowpuncher? You don't actually punch cows do you?

AV: Oh I tell you. I've heard that question asked. I think it's because somebody named 'em that because when they're goin' down the chute they punch 'em with a stick or something to make 'em keep goin' down, so I think that's where that name came from.

CP: Okay. Well, what I'll try to do then is ... I'll sort of abbreviate what we're gonna talk

about next time, so it's just on one piece of paper, so you can look at it and maybe it'll jog your memory, 'cause I know it's hard to go back all those years. I'm only thirty five, but don't ask me what happened when I was twenty, because I can't remember.

AV: Well, see, now, you ask me about friends on Santa Rosa from a long time ago, and now, after you've asked me, then I think of quite a few people that I knew pretty well or who were pretty impressionable.

CP: Like who?

AV: I can't think of anybody right now.

CP: That figures.

AV: No, but ol' CW Smith, but then I think of Howard Rogers. He was a cowpuncher, and quite a character, a real good friend, and ol' Boxcar Bill...

CP: I love that name. Who made that up?

AV: The reason they named him Boxcar Bill, is he was goin' someplace and he got in a boxcar, and on a ... he hooked a ride on a ... that's the way these boys used to ride the rods, is they, you know that, years ago on a train, and he got in a boxcar and he rode all night and the goddamn boxcar ended up in the same place as he started, so they nicknamed him Boxcar Bill. That was the story he told, anyway.